



Florida House of Representatives

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HOUSE REPUBLICANS OFFER BUDGET THAT CUTS EDUCATION AND RAISES TAXES ON WORKING FAMILIES

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. --- More than halfway through the 2009 legislative session, Florida House Republicans admitted today that they intend to raise taxes on working Floridians, cut education spending and reduce vital services.

During Thursday's deliberations on the Fiscal Year 2009-10 state budget, House Republican leaders acknowledged that the nearly \$1-billion in so-called fee hikes they are proposing amount to new taxes on Florida families.

"It is what it is," said House PreK-12 Appropriations Chair Anitere Flores, a Miami Republican.

Florida House Democrats have proposed alternatives -- which Republican leaders have blocked from being debated in the Florida House -- that would balance the state's budget without making radical and reckless policy changes. These Democratic proposals include closing tax loopholes for the rich, collecting

sales taxes on purchases made over the Internet, and deleting certain outdated sales tax exemptions.

In sharp contrast, House Republicans appear to have abandoned their self-imposed Grover Norquist-led no-taxes mantra by proposing drastic increases in taxes and fees on low-income and middle-class wage earners. Vehicle fee license tags will be doubled and fees will be increased on waste disposal and others services impacting working families.

The House Republicans' proposed state budget features nearly \$1 billion in cuts to education and other programs.

"This budget will cause real pain to real people," said House Democratic Minority Leader Franklin Sands. "Tragically, the pain will be felt by our children, by state and local workers, by nursing home patients, by firefighters and police men and women."

"By plugging new federal economic recovery dollars into programs while simultaneously diverting state money from those same programs to other parts of the budget, House Republicans have created an education budget that is little more than a shallow shell game," said Rep. Martin Kiar, D-Parkland, Democratic Ranking Member, House PreK-12 Appropriations Committee.

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